

HIABS  
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Pleasant Valley Depot  
State Route 679  
Rockingham County  
Virginia

HABS No. VA-1249

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

PLEASANT VALLEY DEPOT

HABS No. VA-1249

Location: State Route 679, Pleasant Valley, Rockingham County,  
Virginia.  
  
USGS Bridgewater, Virginia quadrant.  
UTM 17.683440.4259622

Present Owner: Sanford P. Tutwiler and Ann D. Tutwiler

Present Use: storage

Significance: Completed in 1875, the Pleasant Valley Depot is an  
extant example of a series of depots built along the  
Valley Railroad in a period of prosperity following  
the Civil War. It is the last of its kind in the  
area and it retains much of its distinctive Victorian  
ornamentation.

PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION  
A History of the Depot

The Pleasant Valley depot was built in 1874 and completed by 1875. Only a year before its construction, the town received the name Pleasant Valley from the Pleasant Run nearby. Thus, in a sense, the depot has been a vital part of the community since its very beginnings. Once part of a series of depots along the Valley Railroad, the Pleasant Valley depot is the last in the area.

When built, the depot consisted of one waiting room for the purposes of the railroad, a general store, and a store room for farm supplies. It also served as the post office and continued in that function until the 1960's. Though owned by descendants of the family that has been associated with it since 1909, it currently serves as a storage building. Many of the store fixtures, counters, and shelves are still in place as are the original post office boxes.

To the north side of the depot in the ell formed by the waiting room and the long store section is a small circular brick cistern. There is also a blocked doorway from the main room which probably gave access to the cistern. At one point, a shed was attached to enclose the ell, and, upon the removal of the shed around 1950, the door was also removed.

Another change in the building was the removal of a raised platform which extended completely across the west side (facing the railroad tracks) and around the south and east sides of the storage room. Exactly when the platform was removed is not known, but the foundations were removed by the present owners around 1970 to allow for greater ease in cutting the grass.

Aside from these changes and the addition of electricity in the twentieth century, the depot stands today nearly as it stood at the date of its construction. Although it said to have been similar to the now demolished station near Mt. Crawford, Virginia and its ornament is suffering from lack of maintenance, the Pleasant Valley depot remains a monument to the prosperity of the valley following the Civil War.

Chain of Title

From the County Records Office for Rockingham County  
in Harrisonburg, Virginia

Book/page

- 14 / 358-9 February 10, 1874  
Peter D. Byerly contracts with the Valley Railroad Company (now a part of the Chesapeake and Western) to build a depot at Pleasant Valley, Virginia. The depot will be built in conjunction with a store to be owned and operated by Byerly under restrictions given by the railroad.
- 28 / 210 March 9, 1886  
Peter D. Byerly leases the store and depot to E. W. Carpenter.
- 73 / 206 September 2, 1904  
Peter D. Byerly sells property to E. W. Carpenter.
- 89 / 259 May 16, 1909  
E. W. Carpenter sells the property to T. J. Johnson. It is at this time that the depot property becomes identified as a part of the house and property across the railroad tracks and route 679 from the depot itself.
- July 25, 1944  
T. J. Johnson dies intestate. The property is now owned jointly by five children: Aubrey E. Johnson, Bernard T. Johnson, Anne E. Dillard, Clara E. Proctor, and Stella O. Myers.
- 240/ 502 September 21, 1953  
Clara E. Proctor dies intestate. Her share is transferred to Elizabeth P. Biggs who conveys her interest to the other heirs.
- 247/ 157 January 3, 1955

Aubrey E. Johnson, Bernard T. Johnson,  
and Stella O. Myers convey their shares of  
the property to Walter E. Dillard.

July 21, 1964

Anne E. Dillard dies leaving her share  
to Walter E. Dillard.

December 2, 1968

Walter E. Dillard dies leaving the  
property to Ann D. Tutwiler.

416/ 289

February 8, 1973

Ann D. Tutwiler transfers the title  
to Sanford P. Tutwiler and Ann D. Tutwiler,  
husband and wife (current owners as of 1986).

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION  
Architectural Description

Exterior

The Pleasant Valley depot is a one story frame building of board and batten construction on a foundation of rubble limestone. The principal facade is to the west towards the railroad tracks. It is denoted as principal, because it has the highest degree of ornament as well as a sign hung in the gable framework which proudly proclaims: Pleasant Valley. From the west facade the building reads as three distinct parts. To the north is a small wing that served as a waiting room. To the south is a larger wing which was used to house farm supplies.

The continuous rubble limestone foundation is found from the north end of the waiting room wing, across the west facade, and around the south end of the supply room. The foundation along the east (or rear) portions of the depot consists of rubble limestone piers.

Across the north side of the waiting room, the west facade, and the south and east sides of the supply room is a dado molding which approximately corresponds to the interior dado. Below each window (even where the dado is not present) is an "X" design of wooden members. An ornamental shelf tops the window surrounds of the west and east gable ends. The double windows of the north and south gable ends as well as the double doors of the west and east gables and of the east side of the south wing are all topped with pediments. All of these except for the two latter double doors have an ogee-arched ornament placed in the tympanum of the pediment. All exterior doors except for the south side door to the general store have transoms. There are three lights in the transom over the single door to the waiting room and four lights over the double doors.

The gables are ornamented in a hierarchy of elaboration with the west gable at the top followed in order by the south, north, and east gables. The west gable design consists of brackets supporting two

horizontal members which support the Pleasant Valley sign. Vertical members connect the horizontal ones creating triangular spandrels. This configuration is continued in each of the other gables. On the west gable there is one spandrel to each side topped by a larger triangular section (the top of the gable) which is bisected by a vertical member which continues upward to form the spire. In each spandrel and the outer corners of the triangle (which are filled in with boards) are cut six-pointed ornaments. To either side of the central vertical member is a more elongated jigsaw form. The south gable is one step lower in elaboration. Although it has a spire, its central triangular space is plain and it lacks the sign. However, unlike the west gable, the south gable, because of its greater width, has two sets of spandrels. Both sets contain the six-pointed forms. The lower spandrels are supported by brackets but are not connected horizontally. The north gable has a spire as well, but neither its single set of spandrels nor its central triangular space has any filler boards or jigsaw patterns. The same is true for the east gable which furthermore lacks a spire.

The roof is treated as four separate intersecting gables with a covering of tin. The south gable is taller, and its ridge slopes downward to meet the west / east gables and the still lower north gable. From the north wing, a chimney rises twelve brick courses above the roof.

#### Interior

The central room, used as a general store and post office, is a long space running west to east. It still retains most of the shelves and counters from the store. The walls and the ceiling are all plastered. The ceiling is thirteen feet one inch in height and has no identifying cornice line. The only decorative moldings occur around the door and window frames. There is a simple dado and a baseboard. The shelves run almost the entire length of the north and south sides. The waiting room to the north would be finished identically to the store were it not for its window and door surrounds which are slightly more

elaborate and are varnished instead of painted.

The third room, the farm supply room, is to the south of the general store. There are no decorative moldings or finished surfaces. It is barn-like in that all of its structural elements are exposed. Since the overall roof is treated as intersecting gables, the only accessible attic is over the exposed rafters of this room.

#### PART III: PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by Ernest O. Shealy as a classroom assignment for Studies in Vernacular Architecture at the School of Architecture, University of Virginia, fall 1986. He was directed in this endeavor by K. Edward Lay, professor of architecture. The documentation was prepared by Holly K. Chamberlain, HABS historian, for transmittal to the Library of Congress in January, 1988.